

The Clean Car Campaign is coordinated by:

Environmental Defense, American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, Ecology Center, Great Lakes United, Michigan Environmental Council, and Union of Concerned Scientists.

The Clean Car STANDARD

The Clean Car Campaign encourages auto makers to produce vehicles meeting these standards:

- 50% more fuel-efficient than other vehicles in its class
- Meets California's stringent tailpipe emission standard (SULEV)
- Cleanly manufactured using non-toxic, recyclable materials

Over 95,000 people have signed this pledge:

"The next time I shop for a new car or truck, I pledge to buy the greenest vehicle available that meets my needs and fits my budget. I challenge the auto industry to give me the choice to purchase a vehicle that meets the Clean Car Standard."



For more information about the Clean Car Campaign, please contact: Kevin Mills, Environmental Defense, 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202.387.3500) or log onto www.cleancarcampaign.org.

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DRIVING FORWARD

News from The Clean Car Campaign



Why They Buy

Cleaner Car customers talk about buying and driving the new gas-electric hybrids.

At the January 2001 Detroit Auto Show, I met several satisfied – make that *enthusiastic* – owners of gas-electric hybrid cars. As a representative of the Clean Car Campaign, I had certain assumptions about why these people had selected these cars – mostly having to do with how “green” they were – but I wanted to hear directly from them. What follows are excerpts of telephone conversations I had a few months later with Betsy Perry, John Johnson, and Katy Duggan-Haas – three Michiganders who are now proud owners of cleaner cars.

“They’re as much fun as a basket of kittens!”

By her own account, Betsy Perry didn’t know she was going to buy a Toyota Prius. “I just wandered into the dealer one day,” she told me. “I went and talked to the sales critter,” she continued, drawing from her homespun lexicon, “and she said, ‘We can sell you a Prius. Just delivered my first one yesterday.’” Betsy placed an order on August 18, 2000, and picked up her new hybrid sedan three months later.

She doesn’t consider herself a dyed-in-the-wool environmentalist, “but of the people I know, I’m greener,” she clarifies. “I’ve been recycling ever since I could. I try to buy glass instead of plastic. I buy toilet paper that’s made from 100% post-consumer recycled paper.”

Moving from a 1994 Escort to a 2000 Prius was a distinct trade-up for Betsy. “They basically come fully-loaded, which I wasn’t used to, and it’s got way more pick-up than any car I’ve had in a long time.” She completed a round-trip drive between her home in Ypsilanti and southwest Colorado, and was impressed by the Prius’ performance on the highway. “I was averaging 41 miles per gallon in the *mountains*,” she recalled, the pleasant surprise still in her voice.

And would she recommend her car to other buyers? “I would tell them it’s a Toyota, and it’s been a while since they built a bad car,” she replies matter-of-factly. And, oh yes, she has one more thing to add: “They’re as much fun as a basket of kittens!”

“I have a blast trying to get better gas mileage.”

It’s probably an understatement to say that John Johnson is an enthusiastic Insight owner. A self-confessed “avid car magazine reader and Honda CRX fanatic,” John had been reading about Honda’s new hybrid car long before it arrived in America. He put down a deposit at a Honda dealer in his hometown of Ann Arbor even before the car had a name. When he took delivery on January 30, 2000, he was the first Honda Insight owner in the Midwest. And if you’d like to know even more about his experiences with the car, you can visit his website, www.insightman.com.

“I’m not your typical green person,” John replies when asked if his environmental concerns led him to this particular car. “I was always interested in a small, fun-to-drive car.” Prior to buying the Insight, John had been driving Honda CRXs for nearly 15 years. Nevertheless, his new car bears a license plate with the green-themed message, IGO ECO.



John Johnson and his Honda Insight.

Driving his Insight these days, he appears determined to get the best gas mileage possible. “I have a blast trying to get better gas mileage,” he declares. “It’s almost like a video game watching those graphs on the dashboard.” In our conversation, John reported getting 60 miles per gallon when the temperature was in the mid-forties, but during warmer weather he’ll achieve up to 70 miles per gallon. “If I go crazy and have the road all to myself so I can creep up hills, I can break 80 miles per gallon,” he notes on his website. “On the first leg of my 82 mpg personal record 15-mile round trip to work, I achieved an amazing 91.1 mpg!”

John says he usually keeps his cars an average of eight years. “I’m going to be sad when this car goes away,” he confesses, and the tone of his voice leaves no doubt in my mind.

“I show it off to people at work, and they think it’s really cool.”

With their first baby due in February, Don and Katy Duggan-Haas knew it was time for a family car. They decided to trade in their 2-door Honda Civic for something safe, practical, and affordable. They were used to getting good gas mileage – their previous car was a Ford Festiva and they also owned a Chevy Prizm – so fuel efficiency was also a purchase consideration. When she

learned the Toyota Prius would soon be available in their area, Katy knew she’d found her next car. “You don’t lose any of the convenience of a regular gasoline car,” she told me, “you save money on fuel in the long run, and you’re kicking out less pollutants.”

Katy and Don pre-registered for their Prius via the Internet in July 2000, and three months later the Parma, Michigan couple took delivery on their new gas-electric hybrid. I asked Katy what was the most noticeable difference about owning and driving a cleaner car, and she didn’t hesitate for a moment. “Probably the biggest difference is that we get to show this one off to people. I show it off to people at work and they think it’s really cool.” A professor at Kalamazoo College, Don brought the car to work to show his students. Katy made a presentation about her Prius to math and science directors she knew through her job as a school administrator. And their accountant insisted on a test-drive when he learned the couple had purchased a new hybrid.

“I think it rides smoother than the other cars we’ve had,” said Katy, but it’s the fuel efficiency she keeps coming back to. “We had stretches driving in the city when we were getting one hundred miles to the gallon,” she said, and even after owning the car for six months, she still sounds like she can hardly believe it.

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